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We're committed to these efforts. And as I said earlier, we'll be committed to these efforts regardless of the ebb and flow of the markets, and our partners can be confident that the compassion agenda of the United States of America will continue.

Ultimately, the only way for a nation to realize its full potential is for its people to live in freedom; it includes both economic and political freedom. When people are free to profit from their abilities, they prosper. When people prosper, they demand more liberty in other areas of their lives. And we have seen this story unfold throughout this region. To continue freedom's momentum, the United States and other free nations are taking practical steps to support young democracies through the Asia Pacific Democracy Partnership. We recognize that democracies develop at their own speeds, consistent with their own cultures. But when people experience the dignity and the opportunity that freedom brings, they never turn back. I've told people a lot, since my Presidency, this truth: I believe there is an Almighty. And I believe a gift of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth is freedom.

As we look to the future, the tasks facing our nations are no doubt demanding. Recovering from the financial crisis is going to take time. But we'll recover, and in so doing, begin a new era of prosperity.

The nations of APEC have faced tests before. We have risen to meet them together, and we will do so again. Over the past 8 years, we've taken measures to protect our people from terror and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We've responded to natural disasters. We've worked to prevent the spread of potential pandemic diseases like avian flu and SARS. We've worked to confront climate change and usher in a new age of clean energy. We're standing for a Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons and with a Burma free of repression.

Above all, we can be confident in the future of this region because we know the spirit of its people. And I've seen it firsthand. When I attended my first APEC summit in Shanghai, just a few weeks after September the 11th, 2001, I said that America would always remember the signs of support from our friends in the region. I remember the American flag flying from every firetruck in Montreal, Canada. I remember children kneeling in silent prayer outside our Embassy in Seoul. I remember baseball players in Japan observing moments of silence. I remember a sign handwritten in English at a candlelight vigil in Beijing that read, "Freedom and justice will not be stopped."

The bonds of unity we felt then remain today, and they will always remain. Long after this crisis has passed, the United States of America will stay engaged in this region. We will continue working with our partners to build an Asia-Pacific where people can work and worship and trade in freedom, where children grow up with hope and pursue their dreams, and where thriving, prosperous nations continue to inspire the world.

Thanks for letting me come by. *Que Dios le bendiga*. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:48 a.m. at the Ministry of Defense Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Ricardo Rizo Patron de la Piedra, vice president, Cementos Lima, who introduced the President; and President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia in Lima

November 22, 2008

President Bush. It's an interesting moment because I've had a lot of meetings with Dmitry and Vladimir Putin. This will be my last meeting as the sitting President with the leader of Russia. We've had our agreements; we've had our disagreements. I've tried to work hard to make it a cordial relationship, though, so that when we need to work together we can, and when we disagree we're able to do so in a way that is respectful to our two nations.

I thank you for coming by today and appreciate your time.

President Medvedev. Thank you very much, George. And in general, though we do have points of agreement and those points of real differences, positions, we are prepared for the continuous work. And I view that, in general, our work was successful.

President Bush. Thank—[*laughter*].

[*At this point, an interpreter gave a Russian translation of President Bush's remarks.*]

President Bush. Thank you. *Spasibo.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:34 p.m. at the JW Marriott Hotel Lima. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin of Russia. President Medvedev spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the Situation in Zimbabwe

November 22, 2008

Nearly 8 months have passed since the Zimbabwean people voted for a new President, yet they still are governed by an illegitimate regime that continues to suppress democratic voices and basic human rights. In addition to its disastrous economic policies which have forced half the population to rely on food assistance, the Mugabe regime is now assaulting doctors and nurses, denying citizens access to basic medical services, and stealing donor funds intended for HIV/AIDS patients.

In October alone, independent organizations documented some 1,300 incidents of politically motivated violence and harassment by the regime. We call for an end to the Mugabe regime's brutal repression of basic freedoms and for the formation of a legitimate government that represents the will of the people as expressed in the March 2008 elections.

In spite of the regime's aggressive actions against its own people, the United States will continue to honor its commitment to provide emergency humanitarian assistance, already totaling $186 million in 2008, and stands ready to provide other forms of assistance pending the formation of a legitimate government that represents the will of the Zimbabwean people.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Secretary of the Treasury Henry M. Paulson, Jr.

November 24, 2008

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for inviting me in for a cup of coffee. The Secretary and I share the concerns of our citizens, the concerns about jobs, the concerns about their savings accounts. This is a tough situation for America, but we'll recover from it. And the first step to recovery is to safeguard our financial system.

Now, last night on Air Force One coming back from Peru, I talked at length to the Secretary about his recommendation on the decisions made to safeguard Citicorp [Citigroup].* We have made these kind of decisions in the past; made one last night. And if need be, we're going to make these kind of decisions to safeguard our financial system in the future.

I talked to President-elect Obama about the decision we made. I told the American people, and I told the President-elect when I first met him, that any time we were to make a big decision during this transition, he will be informed, as will his team.

Secretary Paulson is working closely with the President-elect's transition team. It's important for the American people to know that there is close cooperation. It's important for the American people to know that we will safeguard the financial system as the first step necessary for financial—for economic recovery. And so, Mr. Secretary, thanks for your hard work. Appreciate it. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. at the Treasury Department.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel

November 24, 2008

President Bush. I am pleased to welcome my friend Prime Minister Ehud Olmert back

* White House correction.